

The City of Seattle is proposing Station Area Overlay District and Rezones for the Othello Light Rail Station Area

The Overlay and rezones are intended to help achieve the neighborhood's vision for a mixed-use town center

Background and Intent of Overlay District & Rezones

This pamphlet summarizes the intent and features of the Station Area Overlay District (SAOD) and rezones. These actions help to achieve the intent of the MLK@Holly Neighborhood Plan and Othello Station Area Planning recommendations. The legislation is intended to accomplish a number of goals that are part of the neighborhood's long-term vision regardless of when light rail service starts.

MLK@Holly Neighborhood Plan Recommendations for the Station Area

The MLK@Holly Neighborhood Plan, adopted by City Council in 1998 (Resolution #29830), supports the development of a transit station that provides opportunities for higher density, mixed uses that can foster a pedestrian-oriented environment in the commercial district along MLK Way South. Specific recommendations relating to changes in the land use code include:

LUH-4.2 Promote retail, restaurant and entertainment uses that are pedestrian-oriented and provide a high level of street activity.

B-19 Evaluate rezoning the area of the intersection of MLK Way South and South Othello Street to encourage mixed-use transit-oriented development.

B-17 Consider refining NC zoning district development standards to provide incentives for TOD.

Concept-Level Recommendations for the Othello Station Area

The Concept-Level Station Area Planning Recommendations, adopted by City Council in September 2000 (Resolution #30165), include the following actions for changes to the Land Use Code:

- Establish a Station Area Overlay to prevent development for automobile-oriented uses.
- Ensure protection of existing single family residential areas while encouraging housing and retail development near the station.



New zoning will encourage mixed-use development near the future light rail station.

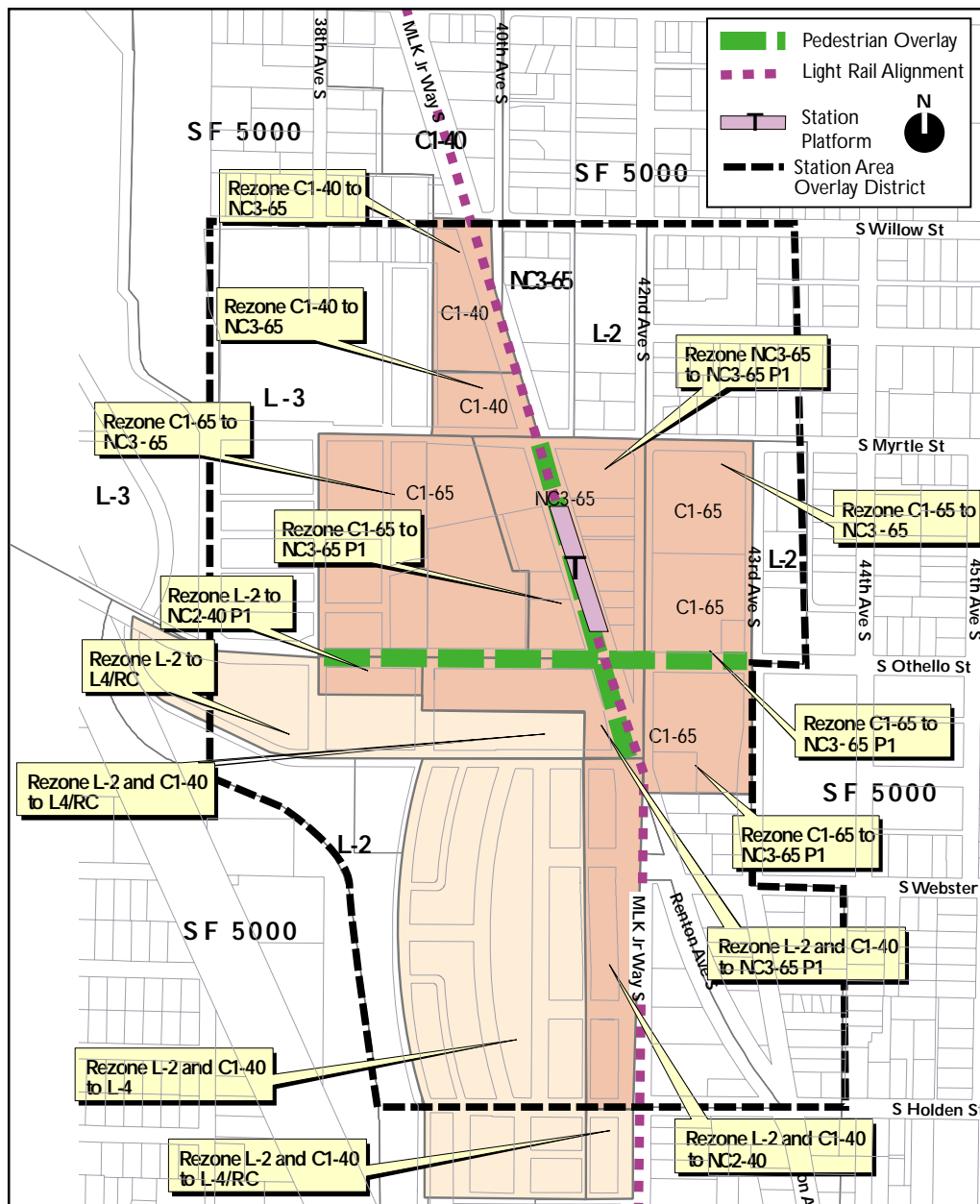
- Ensure sensitive transition from higher density mixed-use and multifamily residential to single family areas.

The elements of the SAOD and rezones, when taken together, are intended to discourage auto-oriented development and increase opportunities for housing and mixed-use development near the future light rail station.

The City will not develop any property in the Othello Station Area. This proposal is intended to set a zoning framework for property owners who may redevelop their property in ways that balance neighborhood desires with their own goals.

While market and site conditions will be major factors in determining the pace and extent of redevelopment in the neighborhood, this proposal is intended to help the neighborhood achieve its vision for the mixed-use town center and the MLK@Holly commercial district.

Rezone & Overlay District Boundaries



Existing Zones

Lowrise 2 (L2)

A variety of multifamily housing types including ground-related units but in scale with single family surroundings.

Height Limit: 25 feet

General Commercial (C1-40 and C1-65)

An auto-oriented, primarily retail-service commercial area, serving surrounding neighborhoods and larger community or citywide clientele with a wide range of commercial services, including retail, offices and business support services; residential use is also permitted.

Height Limit: 40 and 65 feet

Proposed Zones

Neighborhood Commercial (NC2-40 and NC3-65)

A pedestrian-oriented shopping district serving both surrounding neighborhood and larger community or citywide clientele with a wide range of retail businesses as well as offices and business support services. Residential use is also permitted.

Height Limit: 40 and 65 feet

Lowrise 4 (L4 and L4/RC)

Moderate density multifamily development in neighborhoods already characterized by moderate density residential structures. RC designation allows for some limited commercial use.

Height Limit: 37 feet

These are the kinds of buildings that these zones allow.



General Commercial 1
(existing zone)



Neighborhood Commercial 2 & 3



Lowrise 4



Rezone Recommendations

Action	Intent <small>(see page 1 for City Council's adopted Neighborhood Plan and Station Area Planning policy direction for these actions)</small>
<p>Rezone all properties currently zoned General Commercial (C1) to Neighborhood Commercial (NC2 and NC3), including the following areas:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - West side of MLK Way S, between S Willow St. and S Othello St. (east of 38th Ave. S) - East of MLK Way S, between S Myrtle St. and S Othello St (west of 43rd Ave. S) - South of S Othello St. between MLK Jr. Way S and 43rd Ave. S 	NC3-65 allows for retail sales and service uses close to the light rail station, to meet residents' needs and to help achieve the neighborhood plan's vision for a mixed-use town center (activity B-19 and policy LUH-4.2) with a range of businesses focussed at S Othello St and Martin Luther King, Jr. Way S.
<p>Seattle Housing Authority New Holly Phase 3 Rezones:</p> <p>Rezone the southwest corner of Martin Luther King, Jr. Way S and S Othello St., currently zoned C1-40 and L-2, to NC3-65.</p>	NC3-65 allows for retail sales and service uses close to the light rail station and to meet residents' needs (activity B-19 and policy LUH-4.2).
Rezone properties on the south side of S. Othello St. west of Martin Luther King, Jr. Way S currently zoned L-2, to L-4 R/C.	L4/RC allows for small scale retail and service uses within multifamily buildings to meet home-based occupation needs.
Rezone properties on the west side of Martin Luther King, Jr. Way S south of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Way S/S Othello St. intersection, currently zoned C1-40 and L-2, to L-4 R/C.	L4/RC allows for small scale retail and service uses within multifamily buildings to meet home-based occupation needs.
Rezone properties southwest of the Martin Luther King, Jr. Way S and S Othello St. intersection generally west of Holly Park Dr. S and north of S Chicago St. from L-2 to L-4.	L4 zoning will provide SHA with greater design flexibility than is available within the L3 height and density limits. L2 remains at the edges of the SHA property as a transition to single family uses.
Add P1 designation to portions of Martin Luther King, Jr. Way S, S Myrtle St., and S Othello St. adjacent to the planned station.	The P1 Overlay designation will help to create a street environment that is more compatible with walking and using transit.

Overlay District Features

Supporting Existing Businesses

All existing legal businesses and uses would be allowed to remain and maintain existing structures and sites. For areas of the city where the real estate market may not support new development in the near future, the Station Area Overlay District will allow for a one-time expansion of certain existing businesses made "non-conforming" by the Overlay District. This is an effort to help maintain the viability of businesses that are already established in the SAOD until the market makes redevelopment a more attractive option.

Shared Parking Provisions

The Station Area Overlay District will allow buildings to provide off-site residential parking by leasing parking on nearby sites. This helps lower the cost of new housing by reducing the amount of on-site parking an individual building must construct and pooling off-site parking resources in the area.

The SAOD will allow parking for residential and non-residential uses to be located on a lot within the SAOD and within comfortable walking distance of the site to which it is accessory. Off-site parking will not be allowed outside of the SAOD and the number of required parking spaces will not be reduced.

Prohibited Uses

All existing legal businesses and uses are allowed to remain and maintain existing structures and sites. The following types of new development will be prohibited in the Station Area Overlay District:

Principal use long-term non-residential parking	General manufacturing	Warehouse	Vessel repair
Drive-in businesses	Sales, service & rental of commercial equipment & construction materials	Outdoor storage	Marine service station
Vehicle repair	Sale of heating fuel	Sales & rental of motorized vehicles	Salvage & recycling
Towing services	Mini-warehouse	Dry storage of boats	Spectator sports facilities
Car wash		Sales & rental of large boats	Wholesale showroom
Heavy commercial services			Work-release centers



The vision for a vital, mixed use town center can best be achieved by allowing more residential use and reducing new auto-oriented commercial activity on commercially-zoned properties. Our proposal removes two obstacles from the Land Use Code for housing and mixed-use development.

Housing Development Flexibility In Commercial Zones: Allowing Single-Purpose Residential Use

As part of the Station Area Overlay District proposal, single-purpose residential structures would be permitted outright in certain locations. Single-purpose residential (SPR) structures are apartment or condominium buildings in commercial zones. These buildings could include housing at the street-level, either permanently or until the market is ready to support more businesses. When the market can support more commercial development, the street-level use could be converted to commercial use.

This proposal provides flexibility and acknowledges market realities for developing either housing or businesses on the ground floors of buildings (on commercially zoned property on the edges of the neighborhood business district). This proposal would apply to all NC zones within the Othello Station Area Overlay District, except for those with pedestrian designations (see rezone map on page 2).

More Housing Without Raising Height Limits: Removing 64% Upper Level Coverage Limits

There are some places in the city where multifamily buildings can use the entire lot area on all levels for residential units. The zoning in Cascade and Belltown neighborhoods allows these kinds of multifamily buildings. This is also the way many of the historic buildings in older Seattle neighborhoods, such as Queen Anne, Columbia City, Ballard, and Georgetown were built.

But in many other places, a coverage limit reduces the area that can be developed for housing on upper levels (64% of the size of the lot for residential buildings in a commercial zone—there is no limit for the size of upper levels for commercial buildings). By removing this "upper-level coverage limit" imposed on residential buildings in station areas, we can help encourage additional housing that is so vital to creating "town centers" and active areas envisioned by Neighborhood Plans, and do it in a way that is working in other parts of the city.

Existing requirements for building setbacks will still apply where residential buildings in commercial zones border residential zones. These required setbacks, along with lowrise building setbacks, promote transition between buildings in different zones. Architectural features such as bays, courtyards, and building details reduce the appearance of the bulk and scale of these buildings, and allow dwelling units access to light and air. These features address one of the main goals of the original 64% upper-level coverage limit.

Also, the required Design Review Program, which was instituted after the upper-level coverage limits were put in place, provides an additional way to address and modify the bulk and scale of new buildings during the design and permitting process.

For more information on the SAOD or rezone proposals for Othello contact Amy Glenn, Strategic Planning Office at (206) 615-0790, amym.glenn@ci.seattle.wa.us



Example of upper story residential without 64% lot coverage (left) and transition from neighborhood commercial to residential zoning (right).

How could these provisions be used in the Othello Station Area?

The map below shows properties that could make use of these provisions. For instance, the Union Gospel Mission (A) or former Cully Springs (D) sites could eventually redevelop as all-residential buildings if the property owners decided that commercial use was not preferable. Also, if they redeveloped, the site of the Safeway (B), "East Block" (C), and parts of New Holly Phase 3 (E) could provide more housing on upper stories if the 64% upper level coverage limit were removed.

